



Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures

Policies for

Foreign Language Reading Requirement and Graduate Language Exam

July 2009

For graduate programs in the Departments of English, History, Philosophy, and Theology, the standard for foreign language reading proficiency approaches the Advanced/Advanced-Plus level of the ACTFL scale.¹

This proficiency level is reflected in the goals for all 6204 courses offered by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. The means of assessment of FL skills in the 6204 course will be chosen by the FOLL instructor.

As agreed by the doctoral departments, students in graduate programs of the departments of English, History, Philosophy and Theology may satisfy their foreign language competency requirement by completing the graduate-level reading course (6204) offered by the Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures with a grade of B or better. The grading scale in FOLL 6204 courses is: A: 93+, AB: 88-92; B: 83-87; BC: 78-82; C: 72-77; CD: 67-71; D: 60-66. The 6204 courses may only be taken for credit and may not be audited. Each doctoral program establishes the foreign language competency standard for its own program, and may modify the standard as it sees appropriate.

Students not registered in a 6204 course may satisfy their foreign language competency requirement by passing an exam course 9831 given by the Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures. Students not enrolled in 6204 may not take the 6204 final exam.

The Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures will offer the graduate reading exam course 9831 once each semester. Beginning in Fall 2009, students must register for the Graduate Language Exam via CheckMarq. A \$100 fee will be assessed. The exam will be given during the first week of classes.

- a) This exam is offered once each semester; advance registration through CheckMarq is required.
- b) The foreign language text used in the exam is selected by the Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures.
- c) The length of the exam period is two hours. Students are allowed to use one dictionary. The use of other print materials is prohibited, as are electronic devices (including electronic dictionaries). Cell

phones must be turned off during the exam.

- d) The reading exam consists of two sections: 1) a translation of approximately 30 lines, equivalent to 85% of the final grade, and 2) a reading comprehension section, equivalent to 15%.
- e) Exam results will be posted on CheckMarq within three weeks of the exam date.
- f) The examiner may choose to discuss the results of the exam with the student. The completed exam remains the property of the Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures.

4. Students who require a higher level of proficiency may enroll in upper-level FOLL courses, as offered. The Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures will not, however, offer free-standing exams to certify FL skills beyond those described in the course goals for 6204.

1 Reading Proficiency Guidelines of the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (excerpt): *Advanced:* Able to read somewhat longer prose of several paragraphs in length, particularly if presented with a clear underlying structure. The prose is predominantly in familiar sentence patterns. Reader gets the main ideas and facts and misses some details. Comprehension derives not only from situational and subject matter knowledge but from increasing control of the language. Texts at this level include descriptions and narrations such as simple short stories, news items, bibliographical information, social notices, personal correspondence, routinized business letters, and simple technical material written for the general reader. *Advanced Plus* Able to follow essential points of written discourse at the Superior level in areas of special interest or knowledge. Able to understand parts of texts which are conceptually abstract and linguistically complex, and/or texts which treat unfamiliar topics and situations, as well as some texts which involve aspects of target-language culture. Able to comprehend the facts to make appropriate inferences. An emerging awareness of the aesthetic properties of language and of its literary styles permits comprehension of a wider variety of texts, including literary. Misunderstandings may occur.